

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR MATHEMATICS SUBJECTS

Deborah Jackson, Liz Johnson

Presenting Author: Deborah Jackson (D.Jackson@latrobe.edu.au)

Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering, La Trobe University, Bundoora VIC 3806, Australia

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ABSTRACT

The Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering at La Trobe University has been designing and constructing mathematical skills support for first year Science students through its Maths Skills Program over the past three years. It has successfully implemented voluntary intervention programs for Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Statistics. Feedback and analysis of subject results indicates these programs are useful in improving student skills and confidence. The model used for this support is different from the usual Mathematics Support Centre in that support is closely linked to disciplinary subjects. As students work through applications of the same skills in multiple disciplines, the program highlights the links between mathematics and science, or mathematics and statistics. However, until now, the program has not been offered to directly support mathematics subjects. Mathematics coordinators have suggested extra reinforcement of foundation skills would be useful for many of the students entering their first year subjects, and the Maths Skills Program model would be a helpful tool for them. This presentation discusses why there is a need for such intervention within mathematics subjects themselves, and how the Maths Skills Program model will be adapted to extend its cross-disciplinary focus to subjects within the mathematics discipline.

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